

INVESTIGATIONS
OF A
NATURALIST
BETWEEN
MINGAN AND WATCHICOUTI,
LABRADOR.

BY WM. COUPER,

Vice-President, Quebec Branch, Entomological Society of Canada; Cor.
Mem. Ent. Soc. of Philadelphia, and Nat. Hist. Soc. of Montreal.

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Labrador has always been an interesting region for the investigation of nature. Its aborigines and their modes of living. Its magnificent lakes and picturesque rivers and fisheries, and other sources by which man can subsist on this rock-bound coast, are subjects which should claim attention at this age of advancement in human knowledge. It was visited by Audubon prior to the issue of his great work on the "Birds of America." Indeed, he knew that without a thorough ornithological tour of research through this northern breeding-ground for birds, his book would contain but few facts in addition to those given by Wilson and other early writers on our quadrupeds and birds. The naturalist who can now go to the trouble of retracing Audubon's foot-steps on the coast, may ascertain the accuracy and truthfulness of this clever writer. This was one of the objects of my late visit to the north coast of the St. Lawrence. I intimated to several of my correspondents, in the United States and Canada, that it was my intention to make a trip along the coast during the summer of 1867, for the purpose of identifying, collecting and studying the eggs of birds found breeding on the coast, and, as far as could be ascertained, in the interior of the country. To cover my expenses, I requested subscribers to this collection. The appeal brought no response from Canadian students, but from the United States, one gentleman, E. A. Samuels, Esq., of Boston, came to my aid, and subscribed for four shares, which he kindly sent in advance. Through the kindness of P. Fortin, Esq., I obtained a passage in the schooner *Notre Dame de la*

Victoire, Capt. N. Blais, who sailed from Quebec on the 17th May. After a passage of 12 days, we arrived at Esquimaux Point. I had a young companion on board, named P. Fournier, who was appointed fishery guardian for the Watchsheshoo station, and the Government supplied him with a good keeled boat, which he had with him on board. As the schooner could not land us easily at Watchsheshoo, we determined to part from her at Esquimaux Point. Here we were about 372 miles from Quebec, and amongst strangers. My companion requested me to accompany him to the Rev. Mr. Beland, the *Cure* of the settlement. After introducing ourselves Labrador fashion, to this extraordinary good man, he requested us to dine with him, and we passed the remainder of our first day very pleasantly. Mr. Beland was then preparing to go on his annual mission as far as Natashquaun, afterwards crossing and making a tour of the Island of Anticosti, terminating the island mission at West Point. The mission is altogether performed by sea. House after house is visited by means of a small boat or barge, as it is called by the people of the coast. These vessels in size and form are excellent for coasting purposes. Mr. Beland's barge is a model of its kind; schooner-rigged and very comfortable. Two men are employed to accompany him. They sail the vessel under his direction, cook and help him in the promotion of his mission; indeed they were treated by the people more like his companions than sailors. After we got our boat ready and everything secure for a start on the morning of the 29th, we were introduced to

a young man named Owen Muldoon, who intended to go down to Watchsheshoo on business. We offered him a passage provided he would act as pilot. This offer he accepted, and we put to sea after breakfast. Esquimaux Point is only three hours' sail with a fair wind from Mingan. The houses are all wooden, and built on an extensive crescent-formed sand-bar. A very large island runs parallel with the point, similar to that at Mingan, and there is sufficient room and excellent anchorage for a large number of vessels. I could not ascertain the accurate number of residents, but from the extent of the sand-bar occupied by houses, it is apparently larger and more prosperous than Natashquan. The people were then engaged in the herring fishery.

On our way down the coast, and a few miles from Esquimaux Point, I shot a beautiful specimen of the Northern Phalarope (*Phalaropus hyperboreus*.) It was shot while sitting in the rough sea. When it was reached and taken into the boat, our pilot, who has lived many years on the coast, stated that the bird was a stranger to him, that he never had seen a specimen before. The sail from Esquimaux Point as far as Attepetal Bay was delightful, and all that could be desired. We had fair wind all day on the 29th. It was only on this day's voyage that I began to realise the wildness of northern scenery—it was altogether new to me. We sailed down through innumerable rocky islands, zig-zag and full of difficult passages; indeed, if we had not been fortunate in having an experienced guide to steer us through, we could never have made our way in safety. Being anxious to commence my Zoological collection, I visited a few of the Islands on our way. The Islands below Esquimaux Point are celebrated as the breeding places of the common Eider Duck (*Somateria mollissima*), Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*), and Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*), during the months of May and June. Having obtained sufficient specimens of the species, we proceeded on our way, and arrived at Attepetal Bay in the evening. This fishing station was occupied by a man named Victor Blais, wife and child. The nearest neighbor being some distance below at Crow River. On landing, at the entrance of the river, I noticed the spotted Sandpiper (*Tringoides macularius*.)

Our pilot and Mr. Blais were old friends and

we were made welcome. Next morning, 30th, after breakfast, I wandered into the woods where I noticed the Robin (*Turdus migratorius*), Wilson's Thrush (*Turdus fuscescens*, Snow-bird (*Junco hyemalis*), and White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*.) The forests north of this bay are dense, and they have a close resemblance to the woods of St. Joachim, east of Quebec; in fact, the general flora as far as I could see, belongs to that of northern Canadian soil. I noticed the first Butterfly (*Argynnis chariclea*.) Mosquitoes appeared in the evening.

May 31st—To-day is the last allowed by law to take away the eggs of sea fowl. I visited several Islands opposite Attepetal Bay, but the Indians had been on them the day previous, and took away all the eggs that they could find. Heard the song of the Purple Finch (*Carpodacus purpureus*.)

One would wonder how the common Eider duck exists on the coast, when a person knows that during the months of May and June, scarcely a duck that forms its nest, and lays its eggs, can be allowed to hatch the latter. But Providence wills it that the species must exist and fulfil its time on the northern coasts. In the first place, the Eider ducks are not generally sought after and destroyed for food. It appears also that the greatest number of the young ducks make their way to the far north, and during their first and second years, are pelagic, but going in large flocks from one part of the northern hemisphere to the other. They are supposed to produce eggs on the third year.

The Indians are enemies of the Eider duck. When these wandering people arrive on the coast, it is just the time when eggs are abundant. From five to seven hundred Indians traverse the coast westward towards their mission at Mingan. On their course, all the bird-frequenting islands are visited by these Indians; all the eggs are taken off and eaten as food. The down is taken from their nests and sold to the Hudson's Bay Company, or to traders while on the coast. I have laid down on beds of Eider down made on the coast worth from £10 to £15. The Labrador Indians are armed with powerful fowling pieces, and the Eider ducks being a great relish to them, they are sent tumbling right and left. If they are

spoken to regarding the infringement of the law, they say in defense that birds and their eggs are the only food which they can procure on their way to the mission—that as the country belongs to them, they have a perfect right to do as they please. The eggs of the Elder duck (*Somateria mollissima*), Common Guillemot, (*Uria ringvia*), Razor-billed Auk (*Alca torda*), Great Black-backed Gull, (*Larus marinus*) and Herring Gull, (*Larus argentatus*), are also eaten by the residents. They send boats to the islands where the eggs are collected, brought home and tested in water, and every egg that sinks to the bottom is placed in a barrel containing a solution of water and lime, but as the latter material is scarce on the coast, ashes is used as a substitute. The Indians and residents are not the greatest enemies of the marine birds—that is to say in taking away their eggs. Several vessels from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick visit the most prolific nesting islands, and in the face of the law defy any person or power to interfere with them. This was the case last year, as I believe it to be every year. They actually hold possession of the breeding rocks, and with arms in hands, dare any man to approach. In this way, they are masters of the place, they visit the islands, and destroy every advanced egg found in the nests of the Elder duck, and afterwards daily visit their nests and take off the eggs as they are laid. Their vessels are painted black, and have no name. This is a shameful proceeding, and should not be allowed. At the time that these eggars appeared below Kegaska, Com. Fortin was at Mingan, and not aware of their presence, and before the fishing guardian at Natashquaun could make arrangements to go to the place, they made off with their plunder. This was some days before the Commander arrived at Natashquaun.

I must now return to the 1st of June, on the morning of which we left Attepetal Bay, on our way to Watchsheshoo, where we arrived in the afternoon. Joseph Tangeauy is the name of the owner of the latter station, which is about 432 miles from Quebec. Mr. Tangeauy has lived upwards of twenty-six years on the coast. His wife was living then with nine young children—seven boys and two girls—the former, although young, are able to help their father in the fishing and curing of salmon. At Little Watchsheshoo, where this man's

house stands, it is considered half-way between Esquimaux Point and Natashquaun, and it is the retreat of all night-betaken boats going westward—even residents on the coast are afraid to sail at night through the numerous rocky islands which intervene Little Watchsheshoo and Attepetal Bay. Mr. Tangeauy's harbor is also the only place of safety to all boats driven in that quarter by storm or severe weather. Therefore, many persons during the summer season call to him for food and shelter, and I can truthfully state that during the fortnight I remained at his house, many instances of this man's generosity came before me. I have not only seen people made welcome at this man's house, but have known them to go away with sufficient food for their voyage. This is generous from a man having a large family to support. But for all this I did not hear a murmur—it appeared to me to be a rule to make all welcome. However, when I spoke to Mr. Tangeauy regarding such benevolence, he stated that he shall always endeavor to carry out his present mode of charity, but, unfortunately, the fishery has been falling off for some years past, and it comes hard to fulfil his wishes. He is not able to do any heavy work, having eleven years ago dislocated one of his arms. He is a worthy man, and well spoken of by the residents of the coast. I think the Government should do something in this case, and I would suggest that a few barrels of flour and pork be left annually at this station to supply the wants of these poor sea-going people. June 2nd.—Potatoes were planted in an artificial patch of earth behind Mr. T's house. During my stay at this place, I made several lonely excursions to the woods and plains. Although the weather was delightful, I made no important addition to my collection of eggs. The Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*) was very common in the little Watchsheshoo river and bred. The Canada Goose frequented their nesting islands in woodland lakes, but some of these are not easily reached—not without a person strips off his clothes and swims to the island where their nests are located. As no opportunity presented itself to bring me down to Natashquaun, I had to content myself in collecting such objects of nature as presented themselves. I saw there was no hope of pro-

curing any nests of our rare warblers behind Little Watchsheshoo; I devoted some of my time collecting specimens of the butterflies which were then appearing. Captured specimens of *Lycegenia Lucia* and *Argynnis chariclea*, which were abundant.

At Watchsheshoo I noticed the runners of wood sleighs faced with an enamelled material resembling ivory, and beautifully smooth from friction. On enquiry I learned that the pieces were sawn from the jaw of a whale, the whole of the bones of which were found in a lake about half a mile inland. From the position of this lake and the large trees which grew between it and the coast, the animal could not have entered it from the present sea. It was evidently left there when the northern portion of this country was covered with water.

June 3rd.—Sea-trout are entering the Little Watchsheshoo rivr. The Razor-billed Auk is now beginning to visit its old breeding places in the crevices of rocky islands surrounded by the sea. To-day, I visited the island for the purpose of procuring specimens of the above bird's eggs but only obtained a few. The Razor-billed Auk makes no nest; it deposits its single egg in crevices of rocks, and when searching for its eggs, I have on several occasions found the parent birds lying dead in the cavity. In every instance, a slight wound was detected on the side of the head, behind the ear. Young Tangeauy informed me that birds of this species are frequently found dead in their nesting places, and that they are pounced on and destroyed by a species of weasel which inhabits the rocks.

June 7th—After rising tide, I prepared my rod, expecting to take some sea-trout, but none would rise. However, I hooked and landed a species of Salmonidae, which, from researches, I believe to be a nondescript, and I now give a description of it. Length 25½ in., depth from top of dorsal fin to base of ventral, 5 inches. Pectoral, 15; dorsal, 13;—the two anterior rays very short. Ventral 9; Anal, 10. Black spots on the cheek-plates formed in a circle, and several spots of the same color scattered a little above and below the central line. Audipose fin long. It was not only new to me but to Mr. Tangeauy, who thought it was a wasted trout. However, on the following

evening, I fortunately hooked another of the same kind, which settled all doubts. I skinned and preserved this fish, and it is now in the Laval University Museum, under the name of *Salmo maculata* Couper.

On the 8th of June, I noticed the Canada Jay, (*Perisoreus Canadensis*), in company with its young, which were nearly fledged. Being anxious to ascertain what these birds fed on, as their nest must have been formed about the middle of April, I shot four. In their stomachs I detected abundance of a soft red berry that grow in swampy places on the plains. These berries grow like cranberries and ripen under the snow during winter. They are gathered by the inhabitants of the coast, who convert them with sugar into a delicious preserve.

June 10th—Mr. Tangeauy put out his first net to-day. The Watchsheshoo is a small river, producing as an average, small fish. Salmon are said to run up some of the Northern rivers early, while a few of the large rivers are late, and nets are not placed until the middle of June. The country behind Little Watchsheshoo harbor is gradually elevated. Near the coast it consists of moss-clad plains, studded with small lakes and woodland. The coast is rocky and innumerable islands margin the sea. The mountains are high and picturesque north of the great Watchsheshoo river.

The weather was delightful during the fortnight I remained at Mr. Tangeauy's. I made daily excursions up the river and through the woods, and discovered that the locality was unfavorable for my investigations; few birds appeared different from those occurring north of Quebec during summer.

June 12th—I felt anxious to leave this place and go further down the coast. To-day I had the pleasure of again meeting the Rev. Mr. Beland, on his return from Natashquan.

June 13th.—Packed all the natural history material collected up to this date, and left them to be sent from Watchsheshoo to Quebec. I may state here that as every resident on the coast is engaged in fishing at this season, it is a rare chance to find a barge or boat going downwards. The wind being favorable, I prevailed on my friend, Fournier, the fishing

guardian, to get his boat ready and sail down with me as far as he could. We left Little Watchsheshoo at 10 a.m., and we had fair wind and weather during the day. We arrived at the entrance of the Natashquaun river at 5 o'clock p.m. Having been previously acquainted with Mr. Sylvester, the fishing guardian of Natashquaun station, I made myself as comfortable as possible during my stay. However, a day or two sufficed to satisfy me that this locality was, ornithologically speaking, not better than the one which I left. The entrance of the Natashquaun river is about four and a-half miles east from the fishing settlement, and the whole of the constat this place consists of sand which occurs for miles in the interior. This is an excellent locality for the iron sand, which is now considered so valuable. It occurs in many places in strata resting on beds of and covered with the common sand of the locality. It appears to me that the Natashquaun river has been, during early ages, a great drift outlet from the far interior, on the margins of which, for 20 miles inland, the iron sand can be seen in these days. I was informed by a Chief of the Mountain Indians that the Natashquaun decreases in width and depth as they proceed inland—that it branches off into a number of small rivulets which form its tributaries. They also state that black sand is seen far in the interior. Natashquaun has undergone a series of early changes, and still continues to change. A large island composed of sand stands at its entrance; it was, no doubt, brought down by the force of its waters in days gone by. On the opposite side, from the present Hudson's Bay Co.'s post, an extensive cliff of sand points toward the sea; it is called English Point, and was the first position on which the Hudson's Bay Company erected their buildings. But I suppose they saw the changes which I have noticed taking place in the river—that the harbor was fast filling up—and they abandoned the place for their present site on the Natashquaun side of the river.

When I arrived at Natashquaun, the woods on the north of the settlement were on fire for several days. It was daily becoming more extensive, and the inhabitants could not say when or where it would stop. It was set by Indians who were shooting Canada geese, then

hatching in the woodland lakes. As soon as Com. Fortin arrived at the Natashquaun river, a complaint was made against these Indians. He sent his men to the camp, ordering them to arrest the accused, and to summons every male Indian to appear before him. They soon returned with their prisoner and the whole male tribe. An indictment was made in form, an interpreter selected and sworn, and the prisoner, an old hard Indian, with his pipe in his mouth, stood charged with the act. But before the matter was half investigated, it was discovered that he was not the guilty party, but his three sons, who were then in the room, looking on quite carelessly. The old man was acquitted, and they were charged with the deed. They, however, cunningly got out of the scrape by pleading ignorance of the law. They explained that having wished to obtain some geese for food, but before they could do so, it was necessary to set fire at the edge of several points of the lake, in order to force the birds from one point to another, near to where they were lying in ambush with gun in hand ready to shoot them. The Commander reprimanded their chief for allowing his people to violate the law, by setting fire to the forests, in the neighborhood of a settlement. This time he allowed them to go, but he threatened imprisonment if such occurred again. It is evident, however, that the Labrador Indians are at enmity with the settlers on the coast—especially the Acadians—and they had more than one reason for setting the woods on fire to the north of their settlement. One object was to drive off foxes, martins, &c., from these localities to higher grounds, where they would be more liable to meet with them themselves, and also to deprive the settlers from easily obtaining the hares which are caught by snares during winter—for during this season they form their principal food.

While I was at Watchsheshoo, several persons made complaints to me regarding the Labrador Indians destroying salmon in the rivers during the months of August, September and October. It was represented to me that as soon as they depart from their mission, and make their way in canoes up the several large rivers to the North, they camp near the spawning grounds of the salmon and spear them indiscriminately. These speared fish are spread

open, dried, smoked or formed into heaps for future use in case of want, or not being successful in the capture of larger game; but should they be fortunate in obtaining plenty of flesh, these heaps of salmon are not visited by them, but are allowed to rot or become food for wild animals. When I met Commander Fortin at Natashquan, I stated these grievances of the people to him, and when the Indians were in his presence, he made enquiry of their Chief, if such statements were true or false. The Chief answered that they were perfectly true, and that he had no control over his people at this time. That, in fact, they speared the salmon to revenge the Government for taking the rivers from them.

Now, it is utterly impossible for the Government to guard the spawning grounds of the salmon, which are in many places far in the interior. The fishing guardians protect the river as far as they can safely go; but something should be done to obviate this destructive mode of lessening the numbers of a fish, which, if allowed to propagate, would make the Labrador rivers the most celebrated in the world. The Indians will carry on this destruction as long as they are deprived from procuring sufficient salmon while they are at the mission or roaming along the coast. True, they have at present one mile at the mouth of the Mingan river for their use; but I am told there were upwards of five hundred Indians at the Mingan mission last summer, and it is also true that there are very few of them who own nets, or would set nets to take salmon legitimately. Therefore, while there is only one mission which they can visit annually, this state of affairs will continue. The north-eastern portion of the Mountain Indians have a great desire for the Natashquan river, and I do not wonder that such should be the case, for on its banks they erect their canoes, which carry them to their winter homes on the north side of Labrador. Natashquan river is besides a great resort for the harbor seal. On account of its being shallow and narrow in some places on the sea-side of its falls, the Indians have many available positions in which to hide while watching to obtain a good shot. Indeed, the poor seals have to look-out when the Indians return from Mingan to Natashquan.

I am of opinion that if the Indians of the North shore of the St. Lawrence were divided into three missions, that much good would result from it. For instance, Bersimits has its Indian mission, and a river which they claim their own, and they are apparently contented; Mingan has its mission, with the privilege of the use of one mile from the mouth of the river for Indians to fish in. If, then, the Government would remedy the evils which I have already related, it would be well to establish a mission at the mouth of the Natashquan river, near the Hudson's Bay Post, giving them the use of the river during their stay. This, I am satisfied, would not only put a stop to their present determination to destroy salmon on their spawning grounds, but check revenge, and prevent them in a great degree from roaming along the coast, robbing birds of their eggs, and shooting every wild-fowl that chance may place in their way. Then the sea-fowl which frequent the islands between Mingan and Natashquan would not be so greatly molested, for it must be borne in mind that the Indians of Labrador are, generally speaking, good Catholics, attached to their religion, and honest to a degree. They would not willingly leave their mission to go a great distance for food, provided salmon and seals were at hand. The latter animal would take up more of their attention, and as they receive three shillings per gallon from the Hudson's Bay Company for its oil, they could obtain sufficient food, in exchange, to prevent them from killing fish and animals out of pure revenge. It is positively desirable that the Government should give this matter their serious consideration and attention. I am led to go so far in making this proposition, because the Natashquan is considered an expensive river to the fly-fisher. The fishing pools are a great distance from the mouth of the river, and the carrying of food, &c., to the house at the falls must, indeed, be tedious and laborious work. I think it probable that it will not be easily leased again for fly-fishing. However, for net-fishing, it is, I believe, one of the best rivers on the coast.

There is another cause which produces enmity from the Labrador Indians towards the Government; that is, they say that no assistance or compensation has been given them for the loss of their former privileges—they

are under the impression that the rivers and the country still belong to them. They say that unless something substantial is done they will continue to act as they please. Now, Commander Fortin informed them, at Natashquaun, that last year the Government granted £500 for their use, and that a part of it was distributed at Mingan. They denied all knowledge of this. I believe, however, the sum expended at the mission was small—only sixty-six dollars' worth of provisions to a few old Indians who were not able to work or hunt. The Commander found it utterly impossible to convince them that a grant of money was made, and they told him as much. Where has this five hundred pounds gone to? The Indians say that they never received a cent of it, and if it has gone from the Indian Reserve Fund, in whose possession is it now? Through the kindness of Peter McKenzie, Esq., of the Hudson's Bay Company, at Mingan, I had the pleasure of examining the accounts of the Company against the Government for goods delivered to the Indians at Mingan; but, in all cases, the sums were small, and the gratuities from the Company to the Indians are much greater than those from the Government. This is strange, but perfectly true.

The Labrador Indians are a peaceable people, having great regard for religion and morality. Several of both sexes can read their own language, and when at the mission, they regularly go to church twice a day on Sunday. They have evidently abandoned the savage modes of life attributed to their predecessors. Yet, a stranger can discern a love of fellowship existing among them, which is probably caused by the ties of relationship. Like all other tribes of North American Indians, they are happy when together in camp. Each family hunt and work for themselves—jealousy does not exist—no quarrels arise among the weaker sex—indeed, the utmost harmony and good will prevails even when the wigwams stand close together, and their occupants number over five hundred souls. I have seen more real affection exhibited at the parting of two families of these semi-civilized people than could be evinced from the breasts of nations long advanced in civilization.

Being poor fishermen, they do not care to capture fish by any other mode but with the spear—an instrument which they handle with

great dexterity. They excel in the structure of canoes, and the amount of labor and substantial work put on them is astonishing—indeed, it is the only good piece of work made by them. Canoe-making commences when the mission is over, and after each family strips their barge, placing it high and dry, bottom upwards, they resort to their canoes, and proceed up the rivers to their winter hunting grounds.

During my passage through the islands, opposite almost every cove or harbor stood the bare poles of a deserted wigwam. There appears to be a general understanding between these people regarding those roofless tenements. They are acquainted with the position of all their resting places, and in case of storm or any other fatality, the locality is made, the barge anchored, and the female portion of the family together with the covering for the wigwam landed.—In fifteen or twenty minutes, the Indian has a house comfortably erected on a rock, and lays his head down, perfectly satisfied that he is surrounded by the sea and safe from enemies. The men generally resemble the European in stature; evidently strong, but having little confidence in their strength, they succumb to the power of the settler, and will run away sooner than receive a blow. There is no ceremony with them on entering a house—in they come, one after the other, without apology, and sit down in silence. If they are made welcome, they become familiar at once, and then their true character is shown. Curiosity lead them to examine every article within reach, and even go so far as to open trunks, &c., and look over their contents, but never take anything away. They are fond of music, singing and dancing. The young Indian maiden who is considered a fair dancer and singer is certain of obtaining a good hunter for a husband. The women are, without exception, stout and healthy—in fact, stronger than the men. They perform all the heavy work while in camp, and each take a great interest in her family. Old and young wear a conical cap on their heads; it is made of alternate pieces of red and blue cloth. The latter colors are those adopted by the tribe, and the men sometimes wear leggings and gauntlets of these combined colors. The Chief's flag was hoisted when the Hudson's

Bay Co.'s steamship *Labrador* arrived opposite the Natashquan River. It was embellished with the sun, moon, star and a beaver. On asking the Chief regarding his adoption of the three former, he stated that they were Heavenly bodies, and he thought them appropriate. There is an Indian burying-ground near the Hudson's Bay Post at Natashquan, and for the information of those interested in Ethnology, I have noted the inscriptions, which seemed to me interesting. The following words are painted on the large cross that stands in the enclosure:—"Jesos shuerimits ka neshkue mestishuts." I have also taken a few names from the small crosses which were standing at the heads of the graves:—"DINA MEN;" "So Pi;" "Don;" "PiTAN;" "Soair;" "KAMANH;" "ADNAM;" "JANMA;" "MTIAH." I have noted a few fac-similes inscriptions which resemble Hebrew, but as there is no type cast to resemble these, it is impossible to give them here. On the gate of the burying-ground at Mingan I noticed the inscription quoted, from the large cross at Natashquan, and discovered that the letter *u* is placed instead of *o* in "Jesos," and the letter *l* instead of *r* in the word "Shuerimits." The following occur at the heads of some of the graves at Mingan:—"PA NASHU;" "TENS;" "OTE PIMISINO;" "MISHAN;" "MALI MALTA;" "PELLAL." I also noted a number of names apparently half French and Indian. For instance, the words "Toma," "An ta ne" and "Joashim," occurred very common. The two former are what I believe to be Thomas and Anthony, and the name "So Pi" to mean Sophie. I also remarked the words "Tuma;" "Ma Ni," and "MANIS."

The mountain Indians respect their dead. Should death overtake any of them in the forest, late in the fall or winter, and the distance be too far to return to a place of interment, the body is carefully wrapped in blankets and suspended from a tree near a river, where it remains until their return in the spring, when it is taken down, placed in a canoe, and carried to the grave.

June 15th—Captured one specimen of a White Butterfly (*Pieris frigida*), a species peculiar to Labrador.

A strong grass, likewise a wild cereal and strawberry grow on the sand plain of Natashquan. One or two of the settlers possess a

few oxen, which appeared to thrive very well on this rough grazing.

I had the pleasure of studying, for the first time, the habits of an interesting Rodent or Mouse (*Arvicola raparia*) that burrow in the sand. Each pair have several entrances to their nest, which is placed at a distance of two or three feet. It is composed of very fine grass that grow in damp places, from which it is carried into the burrow, where it is formed into a globular shape, neatly and compactly put together, having a small hole in the side, similar to the nest of a wren. On disturbing a nest containing young (3), the parents did not appear to exhibit signs of fear, but suffered to be taken into my hands. This mouse also construct winter nests of equal architectural beauty on the surface of the plain, which is strong evidence that it does not hibernate, but like its species in more southern latitudes, continue its activity under the snow.

At this season, the sweet song of the Fox-colored Sparrow (*Passerella iliaca*) is pleasing to the ear of man, while wandering through the open parts of these northern forests, and with no little joy I discovered its nest (June 15th), and authenticated its eggs for the first time. Audubon has made a mistake in his description of the eggs of this species. The egg is larger than that of any other sparrow found within this latitude, and they are completely covered with blotches of a ferrugineous tint. Contrary to the habit of sparrows, this nest was built in a low fir tree, about three feet from the ground.

June 17th—The weather during the last week has been warm, consequently came mosquitoes, sandflies and breezeflies. Indeed, no other part of the world can equal Labrador in the production of these pests. During excursions through the woods, I found it necessary to keep my face and hands continually besmeared with lard, to prevent poisoning from their bites. Gause covering the head is serviceable while salmon or trout fishing, but it is of no use to enter the forests of Labrador with a fly-protection of this kind. The trees are dense, and their lower branches short, and continually in one's way, so that it requires the strongest clothes to outstand them.

Under this date, I discovered a commencement or foundation of a nest of the beautiful

little yellow warbler (*Dendroica aestiva*), so familiar to every Canadian farmer. Captured a purple specimen of *Cicindela albilabris*, and several white butterflies (*P. frigida*), which are now quite common.

June 20th—Found the nest of the black-poll warbler (*Dendroica striata*), which was new to me and my collection. Noticed both sexes of the Blackburnian warbler (*Dendroica blackburniae*), but failed to discover their nest.

June 22nd—I devoted this day to the collection of Coleoptera or beetles, and captured as follows:—*Cicindela albilabris* Kirby.—Occurs in paths leading to the settlement of Natashquan. *Cicindela hirticollis* Say.—On the margin of the river; abundant. One specimen of the rare *Calosoma frigidum*, and one of *Cymindis laticollis*. *Bembidium impressum* was found on the margin of the sea shore. I also captured several species of humble bees and other forms belonging to the order *Hymenoptera*, which have to be placed in the hands of a systematist for determination, prior to their publication.

I have been informed by the people residing between Natashquan and Kegaska, that the settlers on the western part of the coast set traps for mink, martin, foxes or any other animal that happen to fall into them during the whole month of August. The skins of animals trapped at this season are not purchased by the Hudson's Bay Company. Unseasonable mink and martin are generally purchased by traders, at about one dollar per skin. This is very wrong, and the Hudson's Bay Company or the Government should contrive to prevent the destruction and decrease of animals at a time not allowed by law.

June 24th—Captured a specimen of a large black swallow-tailed Butterfly (*Papilio asterias*). This species occurs throughout the southern coast of Labrador and Newfoundland. It is abundant in the United States and Western Canada. The singularity of the butterflies occurring between Miramichi and Watchicouti, leads me to believe that I have been on the dividing line between the Canadian and Labradorian faunae. But it is curious, that while almost the whole of the Lepidopterous insects are different from those occurring in Canada, the Coleoptera or beetles are the same. I did

not find one specimen between the above places, which differed from those found in the Province of Quebec.

June 26th—Two days' provisions were got ready, and placed into a boat. In company with the fishing guardian, I set out to see the falls or rapids of Natashquan, which are about ten miles up the river. We reached our destination late in the afternoon. The scenery is very pretty as the falls are approached. In a corner of the forest quite adjacent to the rocky margin of the river, stands a solitary house, built for the comfort of gentlemen who go there to fish. After the boat was secured, for its loss at this locality would place us in an awful predicament, indeed. There would be little chance of getting back to the mouth of the river, unless through length of absence, aid might come from the coast. We next inspected the domicile which we were to occupy, at least for one night. It had no door, but we soon supplied the deficiency by suspending the boat's sail, as a substitute. The evenings at this season are very cold, and it was found necessary to keep up a fire, which was kindled in the centre of the floor, and the night was passed as best we could. Numbers of salmon were seen passing up the rapids on their way to the spawning-grounds, and all the pools in the river were occupied by the harbor seal, a great enemy to the salmon.

June 27th—Shot a specimen of the black-backed three-toed Woodpecker (*Picoides arcticus*). After having traversed through the pathways made by the fishermen along the edge of the river, and had a good view of the locality, we made ready to return. On our way down, we had excellent sport at seal shooting; but our shot was not heavy enough, and although several were severely wounded, we only obtained one. When a seal is shot through the head, it is necessary to make haste in order to secure it ere it sinks to the bottom, where it can only be reached by means of a strong hook attached to a long pole. In the afternoon, we arrived at the mouth of the river, and I had a delightful and successful evening's angling, landing thirteen dozen Sea Trout. The Natashquan is one of the best rivers on the coast for the latter fish. A person need not go to the trouble of entering a boat nor wet his feet; it is only necessary to

watch the rising tide, and then walk along the edge of the sandy shore, casting the fly over the deepest parts.

June 29th.—I determined the length of time that the Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica aestiva*) take to construct its nest. It was commenced on the 17th, and the first egg was laid on the 26th, hence it occupied nine days in its formation.

July 2nd.—Left Natashquan in a barge in company with the fishing-guardian, who intended to go down as far as Watchicouti. We arrived at Kegaska harbor at 5 p.m., and proceeded to Musquaro, which we reached late in the evening. Three or four poor families reside at the latter place. They employ their summer time in fishing for cod and herring, but these fish were not prolific during the season of 1867, and their chances of obtaining winter comforts were very poor indeed, for unless fish are abundant, these people cannot secure the necessities of life. Traders have heretofore given credit to large amounts, the greater portion of which can never be recovered; therefore, they cannot obtain goods now unless fish and oil can be had in exchange.

July 4th.—Captured specimens of a very pretty Butterfly, (*Lycæna Lygdamus*.) It was first described from Hudson's Bay, and is found about Lake Winnipeg and the Saskatchewan.

The coast is rocky and elevated from Kegaska downwards. Some of the Islands are covered with stunted pines, while others are over-spread with a kind of mould, and clothed with herbage.

We set sail for Watchicouti on the afternoon of the 4th. This river is decidedly one of the most picturesque on the whole of Labrador. It enters the sea from an easterly direction, and its entrance, for miles, is bounded on the sea side by one continuation of rock, while the land-side presents a similar series, having the appearance, on first view, as if the river had eaten its passage through these primitive rocks. In some parts, it greatly resembles the Saguenay. We arrived at the fishing-house of the lessee of the river in the evening. His name is John Gireaux, who, with his wife and three children, remain during the salmon catching season, in the solitary dwelling. The barge of the Rev. Mr. Auger, of Natashquan,

lay at anchor in the river; he was on his mission, which extends as far as Blanc Sablon. Very fine salmon are taken from the Watchicouti, and Mr. Gireaux appeared satisfied with his success up to this time. Early next day, we made ready to return, and put to sea. This being the nesting season of the Arctic Tern, (*Sterna macroura*,) we sailed to an Island opposite, Missini, where I procured some pretty varieties of this bird's eggs. We arrived in the harbor of Kegaska in the forenoon. The latter place has a very good harbor, safe for vessels in all weather. The settlement is situate on the north side, and the inhabitants are principally Acadians. A nest of the White Ptarmigan (*Lagopus albus*), containing a few eggs, was found at this place. I was informed that iron sand occurred at Kegaska; but I did not meet with it. If it has been found in the neighborhood, it is nothing more than the outskirts of the drift, for the extent of the common sand-drift diminishes to the east of this settlement, and it is a fact worthy of remark that the iron sand does not occur on the coast, in places where there is an absence of the common sand.

After passing a few hours at this settlement, we set sail for Kegaska river, at the entrance of which resides Mr. W. S. Forman, who has lived a number of years on the coast. The river enters the sea on the north-west of the harbor. It is narrow at its entrance, and its banks are composed of the same sands found at Natashquan. Mr. Forman owns a very pretty schooner, which was moored in the river about a gun-shot from his dwelling. To my enquiry as to what induced him to remain so long with his family on this rocky coast, he answered that, having been at one time a trader, and placing reliance on the honesty of the residents, he gave credit to large amounts, the greater part of which was not then paid, and he found it necessary to remain in order to have an opportunity of collecting it.

The fishery guardian was informed that the lessee of the river, a man who resides at Kegaska harbor, had been taking salmon against law; that the meshes of his nets were much smaller than allowed by the act provided for the capture of salmon. On examination, it was found to be the case; consequently, the nets were confiscated and carried to Natash-

quanun. The lessee placed nets of similar meshes in the river during the season of 1866, and Commander Fortin reprimanded him for violating the law. However, it appeared in this instance that there was not only a determination to evade it in making nets to suit his purpose, but in audaciously placing them in positions to entrap every fish passing upwards. The Government should not renew leases of rivers to persons who have no regard for law. Such greedy propensity for filting barrels in this manner ought to be prevented. Sufficient respectable residents can be found on the coast, who are anxious to procure rivers, and fish them legitimately. A certain space of the river should be continually left open during the six days of the week, for the passage of salmon, and the present law compels the lessee to raise his nets, provided the weather is favorable to reach them, from sunset on Saturday till sunrise on Monday. Although this has been attended to in the places where I visited, it does not meet with approval, for it is said by the people that more salmon pass up the rivers on Sundays than any other day of the week. I will not vouch for the truth of this strange statement, but it cannot be denied that a universal feeling exists against this portion of the law. The salmon fishers of Labrador heartily proclaim against the present stake-net system, and are very anxious to return to the old mode of taking fish. They mention, for instance, the Etamaneau river, which has always been fished profitably by river nets instead of weirs. This river belonged by right to an old Seigniory, and latterly it was transferred under the same title to Michael Blais, its present owner.

July 6th.—On my return, the woods adjoining the coast were on fire between Kegaska and Natashquaun, and when sailing past I heard the rocks explode from the great heat. This fire was no doubt a continuation of the one which the Indians set near Natashquaun; and it must have destroyed woods, &c., for about twenty miles on the north side of the river, where a change of wind carried it across a narrow part of it, and thence consumed all before it to this date. I arrived at Natashquaun in the evening.

I did not notice many cases of consumption or other diseases that prevail in inland towns or villages.

I understand that neither Esquimaux Point or Natashquaun can boast of a resident medical man. Although the people of these settlements are, to a great degree, free from the mortality that occasionally visit inland places, still they have diseases peculiar to themselves. One of these is called "Cold Murrair," or poisoning of the fingers while skinning seals in the spring of the year. The following account of its supposed origin was related by one of the sufferers:—If a man receives a scratch or puncture on any of his fingers when on the ice, and afterwards skin seals, the inoculation will certainly take place, and they become useless by a disease resembling whitlow. The people have not yet discovered the actual cause,—but that there is some kind of poisonous fluid circulating in the animal during the spring, which produces the disease cannot be disputed, as crews of vessels have been poisoned while seal-hunting on the ice.

July 13th.—I learned from F. Dore, Esq. of the Hudson's Bay Company, at Natashquaun, that a Quebec steamer was at Mingan. He engaged a barge to go to the latter place on business, and I embraced the opportunity of getting a little nearer home. At 11 o'clock I was on the sea again, and arrived at the Agwanus river in the afternoon. The wind being contrary, it was impossible to proceed further, and I was hospitably received by Mr. Sylvester Kennedy, the lessee of the river. Iron sand occur on the banks of this river. Mr. Kennedy expressed himself in rather strong terms against surveyors entering the locality and taking lots in the vicinity of his house, and he ordered them off. The Agwanus enters the sea on the west of Natashquaun. It is a good salmon river, and is selected by the Indians as a northern canoe route.

July 14.—The vessel was directed westward at nine o'clock a.m., and I arrived at the Nantiappi in the afternoon. It is a narrow, although good salmon river, entering the sea on the east of Watchsheshoo. From the appearance of the locality, I have no doubt that iron-sand will be discovered near the river. The inhabitants are unwilling to give information to strangers relative to the whereabouts of the metal. The Hudson's Bay Co. formerly had a post where the house of Mr. Rochet now stands,

and in the vicinity there is an old Indian burying-ground, said to be over one hundred years old. The Arctic Tern occupy rocky islands near the river. In several nests were young birds in the down, while in others, freshly laid eggs were found, which is the case with almost all sea-fowl that depend on fish for food.

July 16.—I arrived at Mingan at 9 o'clock p.m., just eight hours too late for the steamer; however, I was kindly received by Peter McKenzie, Esq., of the H. B. Co. The Mingan is narrow, but a pretty river, having abundance of sand on its banks. A tributary, called the Manitou, falls into it a few miles from its entrance, and the fishing pools are the easiest of access of any on the coast. About fourteen Indian families were in camp at Mingan when I arrived. Six gentlemen were angling for salmon, and had possession of the river by lease. They were almost daily tormented by these crafty Indians, who represented that they had nothing to eat and were starving. Consequently, they were supplied with as much food and salmon as could be spared. But this was not sufficient. It appears that one of them reported in camp that he had seen a gentleman gaff salmon in the whirlpool at the foot of the rapids. The report took well, and Mr. Brulot, the fishery guardian, was told that if the white men speared or gaffed salmon, they would do likewise, and intimated that on Sunday, the 21st, they would proceed to the pool and spear as many as they required. And when the day came, they were as good as their word. When Mr. Brulot, together with a man from the post and myself, arrived at the pool, we found several fine fish laying in a cavity of the rock. After a good deal of argument, in which they held that the country belonged to God and themselves, we induced them not to kill any more, and after securing the fish, they entered their canoes and returned to camp.

July 22nd.—Noticed the ruby-crowned Wren (*Regulus calendula*) feeding its young in the woods near the river. In a small clearing behind the post, a small blue Butterfly (*Lycaena Scudderii*) occurred. This species has been found at Lake Winnipeg, also at the Saskatchewan and London, Ontario. I took specimens of another Butterfly (*Argynnis Boisduvalii*) at Mingan. Great Slave Lake and Hudson's Bay are the only other localities from which it has been received. It does not occur in Upper Labrador. Mr. Scudder, of Boston, informs me that this species is closely allied to his *A. Montinus*, from the White Mountains.

July 24th.—I accepted an invitation from Mr. McKenzie to accompany him to the Romain river, where he intended to angle for salmon. This river enters the sea about half way between Mingan and Esquimaux Point. The falls and fishing pools are near its entrance. We arrived in the afternoon. It rained heavily in the north on the day previous, and the river was not clear. Fortunately I managed to hook a fresh run salmon of about eleven pounds. This was the only fish seen that evening. Next day the river was not much improved, and we concluded to explore it. Everything needful having been placed in the canoe, we started, and in the afternoon our rods were in our hands again at the pools of the north-west branch, about ten miles inland. Salmon are abundant in the branch at this season. There are three or four falls, each more elevated as we advance; one in particular is formed that salmon leap it with difficulty. Therefore the fish collect in the rapids, and good sport can be had about the middle of July when the water is low. On the following day we returned to Mingan, where I remained until the 30th, when, through the kindness of Sir Greville Smyth, who came from Europe to fish the Mingan, I had a passage in the schooner *Mary*, Captain Joncas, for Quebec.

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